

Application Serial No. 09/817,446
Attorney Docket No. SAFTY-001BC

associated membrane module, and a filtrate which emerges from that membrane module will be received within the associated filtrate-receiving vessel;

a cover for sealing each of said filtrate receiving vessels and said cavity of said housing, the cover having at least one sample port bounded by a rim extending from the surface of the lid away from the cavity, and the rim is structured to retain the at least one membrane module; and

a differential pressure source to cause a pressure differential between each of said sample-receiving wells and each of said filtrate-receiving vessels, said pressure differential being operative to drive each sample through the associated membrane module and the resultant filtrate into the associated filtrate-receiving vessel.

7. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein at least one of said membrane modules has portions formed of a first hard material, and portions formed of a second elastomeric material, the portions formed of said elastomeric material being at locations which abut against neighboring components of the apparatus to provide substantially air tight sealing therebetween.

67. (Twice Amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the at least one membrane module comprises a plurality of membrane modules, and at least two of the membrane modules are configured so as to nest within one another when stacked, thereby ensuring proper alignment of the membrane modules to allow sample to flow through each sample flow channel.

68. (Amended) An apparatus for non-electrophoretic determination of the presence of at least one analyte in at least one flowable sample, said apparatus comprising:

a base having a cavity formed therein;

at least one filtrate receiving vessel disposed in the cavity of the base;

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a cover sealed over the cavity of the base, the cover comprising at least one sample port disposed over the at least one filtrate receiving vessel to permit filtrate from a sample to flow through the sample port into the filtrate receiving vessel, the at least one sample port surrounded by a rim extending from the cover away from the at least one filtrate receiving vessel; and

at least one membrane module disposed over the rim surrounding the at least one sample port of the cover, the at least one membrane module having a receiving cavity for receiving a sample to be filtered, and a filter for filtering the sample.

69. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 68 wherein:

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the at least one filtrate receiving vessel comprises a plurality of filtrate receiving vessels;

the at least one sample port comprises a plurality of sample ports, each of the sample ports being disposed over a different one of the filtrate receiving vessels;

a plurality of membrane modules, each of the membrane modules being disposed over the rim surrounding a different one of the sample ports; and

wherein the cover further comprises a lid disposed on the receiving cavity of each of the membrane modules.

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72. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 68 further comprising at least one second membrane module nested in the at least one membrane module disposed over the membrane module disposed over the rim surrounding the at least one sample port.

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78. (Amended) An apparatus for non-electrophoretic determination of the presence of at least one analyte in at least one flowable sample, said apparatus comprising:

a base having a cavity formed therein;

at least one filtrate receiving vessel disposed in the cavity of the base;